



Book	Policy Manual
Section	0000 Bylaws
Title	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS
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#### 0167.3 - **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express themselves on District matters.

To permit fair and orderly public expression, the Board shall provide a period for public participation at public meetings of the Board. The Board hereby adopts and publishes rules to govern such participation in Board meetings and in Board committee meetings, including, but not limited to, setting time limits for participants, providing for the designation of spokespersons for a group, and maintaining order and decorum during the public comment period. The rules shall be administered and enforced by the presiding officer of the meeting.

The presiding officer shall be guided by the following rules:

- A. Public participation shall be permitted as indicated on the agenda. Anyone with concerns related to the operation of the schools or to matters within the authority of the Board may participate during the public portion of a meeting.
- B. The presiding officer may limit the scope of public comment based on the specific circumstances of the meeting and potential time constraints (i.e. the number of individuals requesting to speak is so large that to allow them all to speak at the meeting would disrupt the meeting).
- C. Meeting attendees who do not register within the allotted time frame will not be recognized by the presiding officer and permitted to participate during the public portion of a meeting.
- D. The presiding officer will make an announcement during the meeting when the period to register has expired.
- E. There will be an agenda item where the presiding officer announces during the meeting that the time to turn in registration cards for participation in the public comment portion of the meeting has ended.
- F. In-Person Meetings:

##### 1. Members of the Public Who Physically Attend An In-Person Meeting:

- a. Members of the public who physically attend an in-person meeting must register to participate in the public comment portion of the meeting. Registration will close when announced by the presiding officer and new public comment registrations will not be accepted after the announcement.
- b. When a participant registers, s/he will be asked to write his/her name on a registration card. If the individual chooses not to provide his/her name, then s/he will be asked to write a number on the card.
- c. The presiding officer, using the participant's name or number written on the card, will call members of the public up to the microphone to provide their comments.
- d. The presiding officer will call several participants at a time to the microphone to speak. For example, the presiding officer will state, "persons A, B and C, please line up at the microphone to speak."

- e. Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and will be requested to preface their comments by an announcement of their name; address and group affiliation, if and when appropriate, although not required.

2. Members of the Public Who Virtually Attend An In-Person Meeting:

- a. Subject to availability and functionality of District technology, members of the public who virtually attend an in-person meeting may also be allowed to provide public comment. They must register to participate in the public comment portion of the meeting. Registration will close when announced by the presiding officer and new public comment registrations will not be accepted after the announcement.
- b. In order to participate in public comment, a member of the public must register using the functionality of the Zoom webinar or other digital platform. For example, in a Zoom webinar a public comment participant must "raise their hand" via their computer or telephone and will be registered for public comment and will be identified by the name or telephone number that is digitally displayed. Participants must "raise their hand" to register prior to the presiding officer's announcement during the meeting that the period to register for public comment has expired.
- c. Such participants will be called on to speak after persons physically attending the meeting have offered public comment.

G. Virtual Meetings:

- 1. When meetings are held virtually via a digital platform (i.e., Zoom, etc.), members of the public must also register to participate in the public comment portion of the meeting.
  - 2. In order to participate in public comment, a member of the public must register using the functionality of the Zoom webinar or other digital platform. For example, in a Zoom meeting a public comment participant must "raise their hand" via their computer or telephone and will be registered for public comment and will be identified by the name or telephone number that is digitally displayed. Participants must "raise their hand" to register prior to the presiding officer's announcement during the meeting that the period to register for public comment has expired.
- H. Each statement made by a participant at Board meetings, including committee meetings, shall be limited to three (3) minutes duration.
- I. No participant may speak more than once at the same meeting.
- J. Participants shall direct all comments to the Board and not to staff or other participants. Comments may not be directed to the audience.
- K. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no person may address or question Board members individually.
- L. Groups must identify their membership and designate one (1) representative to speak. This representative may speak for up to six (6) minutes and no additional, individual comments from members affiliated with or directly related to the group will be accepted from the group thereafter. Determination of affiliation is at the discretion of the presiding officer.

M. The presiding officer may:

- a. prohibit public comments which are frivolous, repetitive, or harassing;
- b. interrupt, warn, or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant;
- c. request any individual to leave the meeting when that person behaves in a manner that is disruptive of the orderly conduct of the meeting;
- d. request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting;
- e. call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action;
- f. waive these rules with the approval of the Board when necessary for the protection of privacy or the administration of the Board's business;

- N. The portion of the meeting during which the participation of the public is invited shall be limited to one (1) hour, unless extended by a vote of the Board.

Parliamentary rules, as specified by Robert's Rules of Order, do not permit cross discussion between members of the audience and the Board. The Board shall reserve the right to limit discussion so that everyone desiring to speak may be heard.

Tape or video recordings are permitted subject to the following conditions:

- A. No obstructions are created between the Board and the audience.

B. No interviews are conducted in the meeting room while the Board is in session.

C. No commentary, adjustment of equipment, or positioning of operators is made that would distract either the Board or members of the audience while the Board is in session.

The person operating the recorder should contact the Superintendent prior to the Board meeting to review possible placement of the equipment.

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[M.C.L. 15.263\(4\)\(5\)\(6\).](#)

[M.C.L. 380.1808](#)

[Robert's Rules of Order](#)